

have never before heard either this somewhat fiendish reassembly call or the interrogatory bark, nor have I heard of them.

Incidentally, perhaps the most notable thing about wild dogs in this area is that, though there are any number of cattle grazing in the jungles, they kill only wild animals. Has this peculiar bias of wild dogs, unshared by most other predators, received the study and consideration it merits?

PERUNKULAM HOUSE,
EDWARD ELLIOT ROAD,
MYLAPORE, MADRAS,
September 20, 1965.

M. KRISHNAN

[A photograph of a wild dog mother with her jackal-hybrid pups born in captivity is published on page 198 of Vol. 35 of the *Journal*. This is referred to in Lt.-Col. R. W. Burton's well-documented and informative paper on the Indian Wild Dog on page 691 of Vol. 41 of the *Journal* in which he deals with other points raised by Mr. Krishnan. In particular, Lt.-Col. Burton speaks of the 'hyena-like' chattering of the wild dog when startled or alarmed or at the time of disputing a tiger or panther kill. According to him attacks on domestic stock are unusual; he refers to reports of some, in addition to which we have before us one that comes from Chikmagalur District, Mysore State (*Journal* Vol. 50: 162-3).—Eds.]

4. OCCURRENCE OF THE NORTHERN PALM SQUIRREL, *FUNAMBULUS PENNANTI* WROUGHTON, IN THE ANDAMANS

While working on the collections of mammals from the Andaman Islands made by the Zoological Survey of India in recent years, I have come across a specimen of the Northern Palm Squirrel, *Funambulus pennanti* Wroughton, which, according to authoritative literature (Miller 1902; Ellerman & Morrison-Scott 1951; Ellerman 1961) is not expected to occur there.

The specimen in question is an adult female taken by the Z.S.I. party at Brooksabad, Port Blair, on 24 March 1952. Its external measurements (in mm.) are: head and body 142, tail 147, hindfoot 37, ear 18. It is a study skin without skull and bears the Z.S.I. Regd. No. 12132. In external characters, it does not differ from the population of the mainland of India.

This appears to be the first specimen of the species taken in the Andaman Islands.

ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA,
CALCUTTA,
April 29, 1965.

Y. CHATURVEDI

REFERENCES

- ELLERMAN, J. R., & MORRISON-SCOTT, T.C.S. (1951): Checklist of Palaearctic and Indian Mammals. British Museum, London.
ELLERMAN, J. R. (1961): The Fauna of India, Mammalia, Rodentia. Delhi.
MILLER, G. S., Jr. (1902): The Mammals of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. *Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus.* 24: 751-795.

[Humayun Abdulali (1965, *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* 61, at p. 495) in a recent visit to the Andamans saw Palm Squirrels (*Funambulus*) near Port Blair, but did not note the species. He conjectures that they are a recent introduction.—EDS.]

5. A NOTE ON THE BREEDING HABITS OF THE WHITEBELLIED RAT, *RATTUS NIVIVENTER MENTOSUS* THOMAS

(With a photograph)

Very little is known regarding the ecology and breeding habits of the Whitebellied Rat, *Rattus niviventer mentosus* Thomas. The only information available regarding its ecology is from the observations of Shortridge (in Wroughton 1916, *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* 24: 307), and Roonwal (1949, *Trans. Nat. Inst. Sci. India* 3: 67-122).

On 10 December 1964, in the course of our study of the field ecology of rats and squirrels in the Khasi Hills, we came across a nest on a tree about 12 ft. high from the ground, on the edge of a scrub jungle at Barapani (alt. c. 3500 ft.) about 12 miles north of Shillong.

The nest (Photograph) was situated at a fork on the tree. The materials used in the nest were stems, leaves, and spikes of grass *Imperata* sp., lined with bird feathers. It was more or less spherical in shape with a single central opening about 1 cm. in diameter. The outer circumference of the nest was about 45-50 cm. and the inner about 20-25 cm.

The nest contained three young rats, more or less equal in size. Their eyes were unopened, fur smooth and well differentiated, and the belly white with the tail bicoloured as in the adult *R. niviventer mentosus*.